Washington, D.C. – The U.S. House of Representatives, yesterday, passed an amendment authored by Congressman Joe Sestak (PA-07) to the Advanced Vehicle Technology Act of 2009, which requires the Secretary of Energy to research and develop methods to reduce waste and emissions from advanced battery technology by efficiently increasing the calendar and cycle life of advanced batteries.

"Advanced battery technology has the potential to meet market demand for greater performance, safety, reliability and cost— all critical elements to developing alternative sources of energy and transportation, including electric vehicle technology," said Congressman Sestak. "However, current battery technology is limited in calendar life and life cycle. This amendment will help extend the life and efficiency of advanced vehicle batteries—ensuring their economic competitiveness."

Currently, many manufactures oversize their batteries to extend the battery's cycle life, but this practice increases cost, waste, and emissions. Congressman Sestak's amendment, therefore, supports research into methods to extend a battery's calendar life, which will address oversizing, short calendar lives and short life cycles-- enabling automakers to offer longer warranty periods and increase the competitiveness of electric vehicles in the marketplace.

"I am encouraged by the potential benefits of advanced battery technology," said Congressman Sestak. "Shortly after taking office, I supported an effort by a small company in my District that was on the cutting edge of advanced battery technology. In 2007, I secured $2.48 million for Lithchem's work in this area. Earlier this year, I strongly supported the inclusion of $2 billion in the Economic Stimulus bill for advanced battery and component manufacturing research. These strategic investments make are strategic economic and environmental investments," the Congressman continued.

The Advanced Vehicle Technology Act of 2009, which now awaits action in the Senate, authorizes appropriations to the Secretary of Energy for research, development, demonstration, and commercial application of vehicles and related technologies for FY2010-FY2014.

It directs the Secretary to: (1) conduct a program of basic and applied research, development, demonstration, and commercial application activities on materials, technologies, and processes with the potential to substantially reduce or eliminate petroleum use and related emissions of

the nation's automotive and commercial vehicle sectors; (2) ensure that the Department of Energy continues to support activities and maintains competency in mid- to long-term transformational vehicle technologies with potential to achieve deep reductions in petroleum use and emissions; (3) carry out activities under this Act in collaboration with automotive manufacturers, heavy commercial and transit vehicle manufacturers, vehicle and engine equipment and component manufacturers, manufacturing equipment manufacturers, advanced vehicle service providers, fuel producers and energy suppliers, electric utilities, universities, national laboratories, and independent research laboratories; (4) conduct research, development, and demonstration activities on connectivity of vehicle and transportation systems; and (5) carry out a research, development, demonstration, and commercial application program of advanced vehicle manufacturing technologies and practices.

It also directs the Secretary to: (1) carry out a program of cooperative research, development, demonstration, and commercial application activities on advanced technologies for medium- to heavy-duty commercial and transit vehicles; (2) conduct a competitive grant program to demonstrate the integration of multiple advanced technologies on long-haul Class 8 truck and trailer platforms with a goal of improving overall freight efficiency by 50%; and (3) develop standard testing procedures and technologies for evaluating the performance of advanced heavy vehicle technologies under a range of representative duty cycles and operating conditions.

Finally, it authorizes the Secretary to undertake a pilot program of research, development, demonstration, and commercial applications of technologies to improve total machine or system efficiency for heavy duty non-road equipment.

Born and raised in Delaware County, former 3-star Admiral Joe Sestak served in the Navy for 31 years and now serves as the Representative from the 7th District of Pennsylvania. He led a series of operational commands at sea, including Commander of an aircraft carrier battle group of 30 U.S. and allied ships with over 15,000 sailors and 100 aircraft that conducted operations in Afghanistan and Iraq. After 9/11, the Congressman was the first Director of Deep Blue, the Navy's anti-terrorism unit that established strategic and operations policies for the Global War on Terrorism. He served as President Clintons Director for Defense Policy at the National Security Council in the White House, and holds a Ph.D. in Political Economy and Government from Harvard University. According to the office of the House Historian, Congressman Sestak is the highest-ranking former military officer ever elected to the U.S. Congress.